

Fisher Harvest 2003

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Abstract

Wisconsin trappers harvested 1,126 fisher during the 2003 season. The harvest consisted of 668 males, 450 females, and 8 unknowns. The five leading counties of harvest were Oneida (111), Sawyer (101), Lincoln (83), and Rusk (79).

Background

Dhuey, et al. (2003) described the results of the 2002 fisher trapping season. Kohn et.al. (1994) described the events leading up to the establishment of Wisconsin's first fisher trapping season in 1985 and summarized fisher harvests and regulations through 1992. Basically the fisher trapping season was lengthened, numbers of harvest permits increased, and the area open to fisher trapping expanded as the fisher population continued to grow rapidly.

Wisconsin is now divided into 6 Fisher Management Zones (FMZ) which are clusters of deer management units containing similar densities of fisher (Fig. 1). FMZ E was open to fisher trapping for the first time for the 2000 season. Fisher occur in low numbers in FMZ F but it is currently closed to any fisher harvest. Fisher harvest goals are set annually for each FMZ based upon population size in relation to management goals. The numbers of harvest permits issued are based on trapper success rates during the previous year in those zones. Negotiated amounts of the harvest in each zone within the ceded territory are allotted to Native American (Chippewa) trappers. The current FMZ's were expanded and new zones were added in 1996. The 2003 fisher season was the seventh under the expanded zone framework and the fourth time that trapping has been allowed in FMZ E.

Methods

Non-Chippewa trappers were required to apply for fisher harvest permits by 10 September, and designate which management zone they would like to trap. The application fee for a fisher permit is \$3.00, (included in the Patron license fee), with successful applicants selected at random.

Trappers were required to register all fishers with DNR personnel. The date and area (county and deer management unit) of kill, sex of the animal, type of trap used, and the trapper's name and address were recorded for each fisher registered. Similar information from the off-reservation Chippewa harvest was compiled by Jon Gilbert of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and provided to the DNR for use in this report. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX computer by field personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

The 2003 Fisher season ran from 1 November-31 December for non-Chippewa trappers and from 1 November 2003 - 31 March 2004 for Chippewa trappers. A total of 3,264 regular harvest permits were issued to 5,654 applicants (Table 1). The number of permits available for the 2003 season was less than in 2002 when 4,342 applicants were issued 4,730 permits. A tribal

harvest declaration of 507 fisher was agreed to for off-reservation treaty harvest.

Trappers registered 1,126 fisher in 2003. These included 155 fisher taken off-reservation by Chippewa trappers (Table 2; Jonathan Gilbert, personal comm.), and 2 fisher taken on the Menominee reservation in Wisconsin. Some Native Americans have been registering on reservation kills with DNR personnel. Also, 28 fisher were registered as incidental take fisher. These are fisher that were either trapped incidental to other trapping activities, found dead, or a road kill, and are included in the statewide totals. Trapper success averaged 30% statewide in 2003; slightly lower than the 2002 success rate of 31%.

Most fisher (306) were trapped in FMZ D, followed by FMZ B (291), FMZ A (263), FMZ C (239), and FMZ E (24) (Table 3, Fig. 1). Fisher harvests were highest in Oneida (111), Sawyer (101), Lincoln (83), Rusk (79), and Burnett (62) counties (Table 4, Fig. 2), and in Deer Management Units 11 (55), 13 (53), 42 (45), 17 (44), and 18 (42) (Table 5, Fig. 3). Males comprised 59% of the harvest, while females made up 40%. Sex was not recorded for 8 of the fisher harvested.

The silkier fur of female fisher, normally half the size of the male, used to bring a higher price. International marketing has now balanced fur values between male and female. The average price for all fisher pelts was \$28.25 in 2003, and ranged from \$21 to \$30. This was an increase over last year's price of \$23.89.

In 2003, 78% of the fishers were caught in conibear traps and 20% in foothold traps and 1% in live traps. Last year, 74% of the fisher harvested were captured with conibear traps and 24% were trapped with foothold traps.

The 2003 fisher harvest of 1,126 was lower than in 2002 (1,803) and below the harvest goal of 1,660. Above average snow fall in December may have reduced trappers ability to pursue fisher. With deep snow, fisher mobility was probably restricted as well. Fisher populations remain at or above our population goals in many of the FMZ's (see "Fisher Population Analyses 2004").

The WDNR Furbearer Advisory Committee has recommended a statewide harvest goal of 2,055 fisher in the 2004 season. Harvest goals by zone are: FMZ A, 625; FMZ B, 475; FMZ C, 425; FMZ D, 450; FMZ E, 40, and FMZ F 40. FMZ F will be open to harvest for the first time in 2004.

Literature Cited

Kohn, B.E., N.F. Payne, J.E. Ashbrenner, W.A. Creed. 1993. The Fisher in Wisconsin. Wis. Dep. Nat. Resour. Tech. Bull. 24pp.

Shuey B. B. Kohn and J. Olson. 2003. Fisher Harvest, 2002. IN: The Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys Report, August 2003. Document on file at the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Bureau of Research, Monona, WI 53716

Table 1. *Numbers of state issued fisher trapping permits, number of fisher trapped, harvest quota, and permit success for the 2003 season.*

Zone	State Issued Permits	State Applicants	State Tags/ Applicant	State Fisher Trapped	State Harvest Goal	State Permit Success
A	460	1,140	0.40	190	450	41.3%
B	650	1,717	0.38	216	420	33.2%
C	820	995	0.82	232	320	28.3%
D	1,254	1,254	1.00	304	440	24.2%
E	80	548	0.15	24	30	30.0%
F				3*		
Total	3,264	5,654	0.58	969	1,660	29.7%

* Fisher were incidentally taken in FMZ F, closed to fisher harvest.

Table 2. *The 2003 Chippewa off-reservation treaty fisher harvest.*

Zone	Chippewa Harvest Allocation	Sex		Total Trapped
		Male	Female	
A	225	50	23	73
B	170	41	34	75
C	40	6	1	7
D	70	0	0	0
E	2	0	0	0
Total	507	97	58	155

Table 3. *The 2003 (Non-Tribal, Chippewa ceded territory, and Tribal reservation) fisher harvest.*

Zone	Non-Tribal Harvest	Chippewa Ceded Territory Harvest	Tribal Reservation Harvest	Total Harvest
A	190	73	0	263
B	216	75	0	291
C	232	7	0	239
D	304	0	2	306
E	24	0	0	24
F	3*	0		3*
Total	969	155	2	1,126

* Fisher were incidentally taken in FMZ F, closed to fisher harvest.

Table 4. *The 2003 fisher harvest by county and sex.*

County	Male	Female	Unk	Total	County	Male	Female	Unk	Total
Ashland	16	2	0	18	Menominee	2	0	0	2
Barron	13	6	0	19	Monroe	1	0	0	1
Bayfield	34	17	1	52	Oconto	26	11	0	37
Burnett	32	28	2	62	Oneida	63	48	0	111
Chippewa	7	5	0	12	Polk	17	15	1	33
Clark	6	1	0	7	Price	35	19	0	54
Douglas	15	17	1	33	Rusk	43	35	1	79
Eau Claire	0	1	0	1	Sawyer	65	36	0	101
Florence	10	2	0	12	Shawano	17	13	0	30
Forest	18	21	1	40	Taylor	27	26	0	53
Iron	8	2	0	10	Vilas	43	18	0	61
Jackson	1	0	0	1	Washburn	30	19	0	49
Langlade	34	24	0	58	Waupaca	1	0	0	1
Lincoln	47	36	0	83	Wood	4	3	0	7
Marathon	34	26	1	61	Unknown	4	4	0	8
Marinette	15	15	0	30	Total	668	450	8	1,126

Table 5. *The 2003 fisher harvest by deer management unit and sex.*

Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total	Unit	Male	Female	Unk	Total
01	1	5	0	6	35	13	7	0	20
01M	0	1	0	1	36	22	10	0	32
02	12	7	0	19	37	17	15	0	32
03	11	6	0	17	38	18	19	0	37
04	1	2	1	4	39	4	6	0	10
05	3	3	0	6	40	8	2	0	10
06	12	1	1	14	41	0	4	0	4
07	0	1	0	1	42	28	17	0	45
08	10	5	0	15	43	12	13	0	25
09	8	5	0	13	44	17	11	1	29
10	6	4	0	10	45	8	11	0	19
11	31	22	2	55	46	25	16	1	42
12	8	3	0	11	47	19	15	0	34
13	34	19	0	53	48	2	0	0	2
14	9	4	0	13	49A	18	7	0	25
15	10	15	0	25	49B	2	2	0	4
16	14	10	1	25	50	6	2	0	8
17	28	16	0	44	51A	3	0	0	3
18	23	19	0	42	51B	4	4	0	8
19	15	16	1	32	52	21	12	0	33
20	11	6	0	17	53	3	0	0	3
22	7	3	0	10	55	5	1	0	6
23	14	10	0	24	56	1	0	0	1
24	5	4	0	9	57	1	2	0	3
25	13	5	0	18	57A	1	0	0	1
26	20	18	0	38	57B	1	2	0	3
28	8	1	0	9	58	2	1	0	3
29A	3	2	0	5	59A	2	1	0	3
29B	8	3	0	11	62A*	0	1	0	1
30	7	4	0	11	63B*	0	1	0	1
31	24	9	0	33	65B*	1	0	0	1
32	20	19	0	39	79	0	1	0	1
33	12	15	0	27	Unk	7	2	0	9
34	9	2	0	11	Total	668	450	8	1,126

*Fisher were taken incidentally or road kill, in FMZ F, closed to fisher harvest.

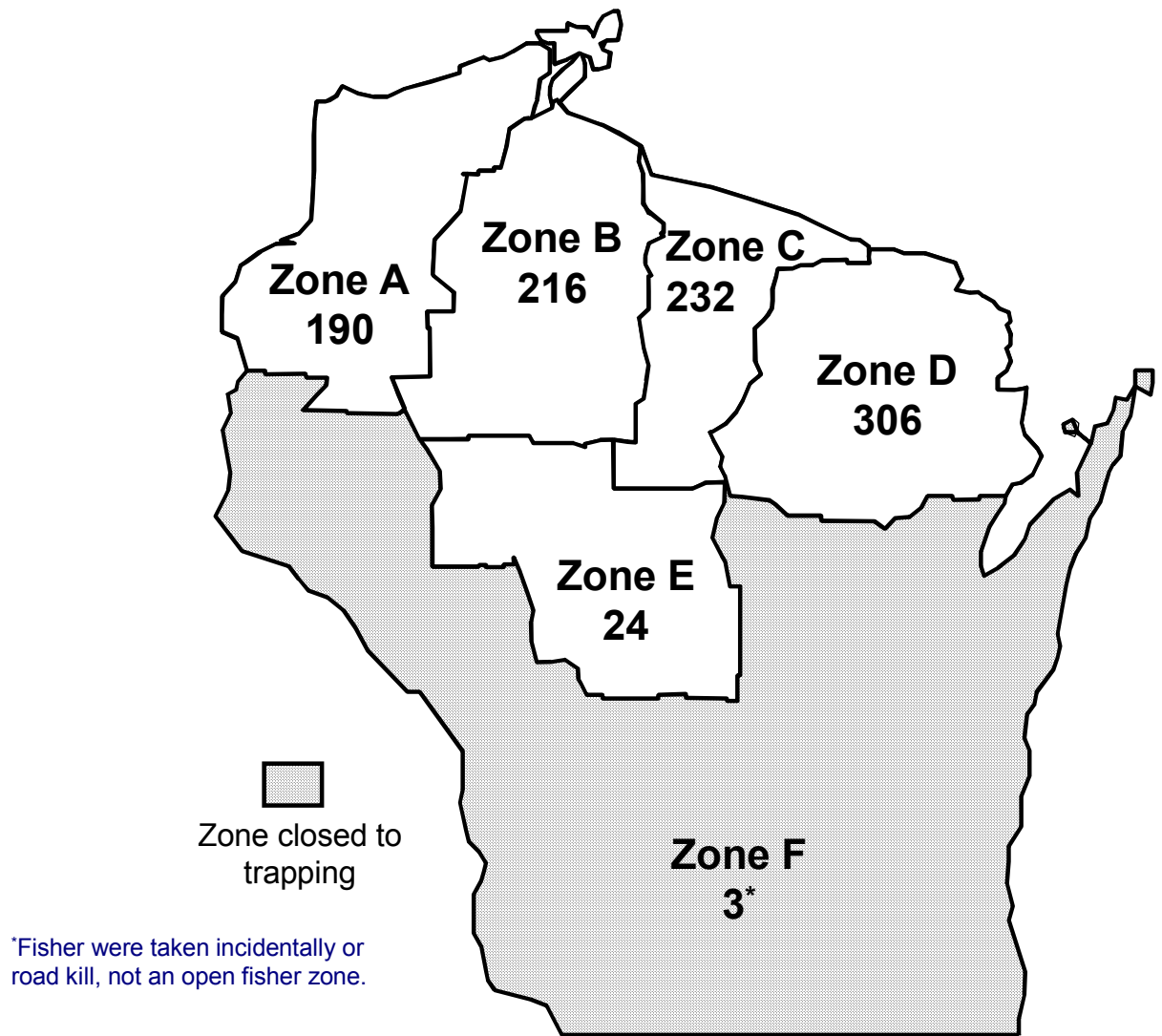


Figure 1. *The 2003 fisher harvest by management zone.*

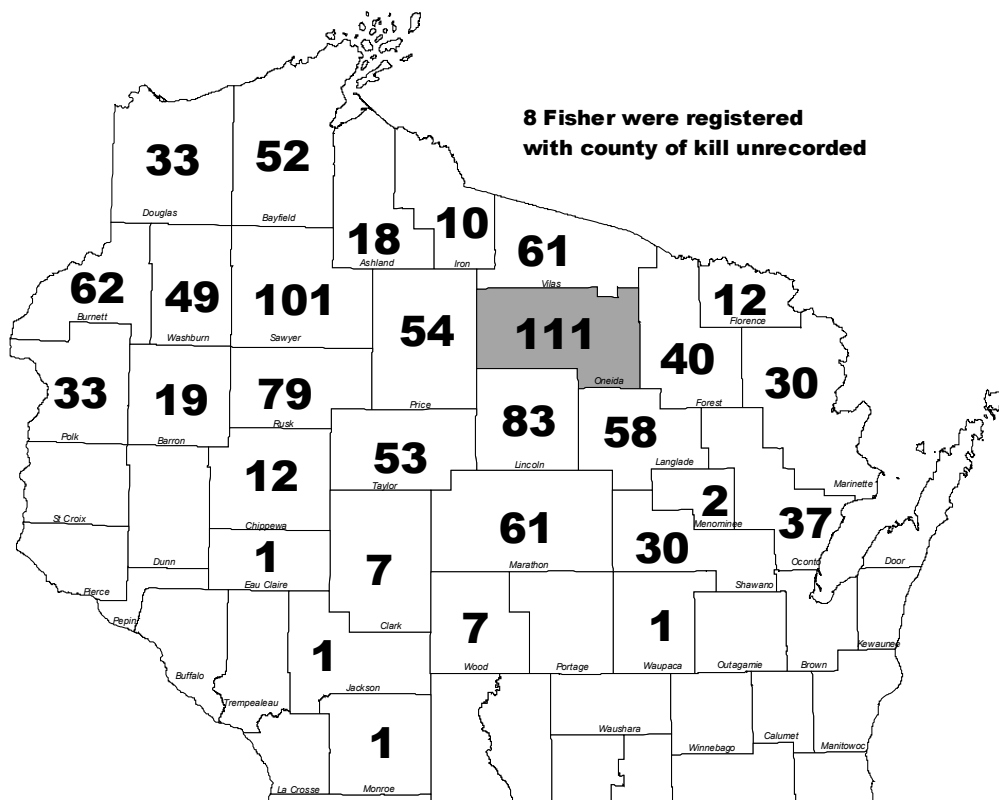


Figure 2. The 2003 fisher harvest by county (shaded county is county of highest harvest).

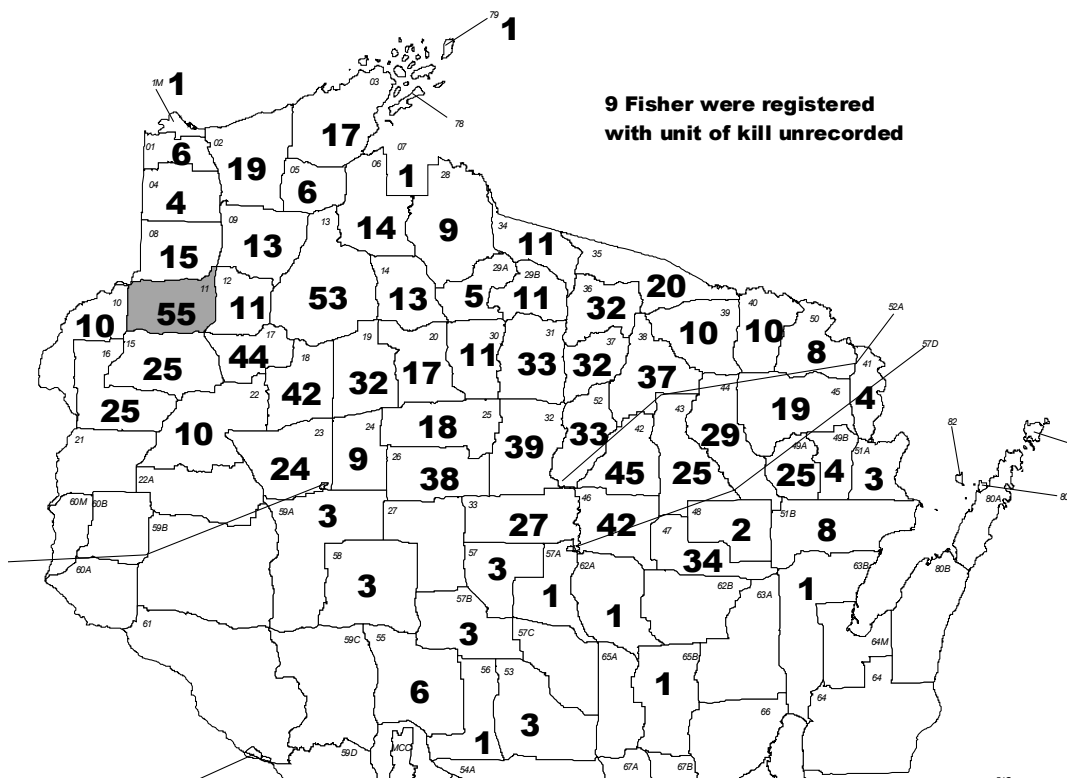


Figure 3. The 2003 fisher harvest by deer management unit (shaded unit is unit of highest harvest).